

# Bosses get a lift, learn



Photo By SMSgt Jim Davis

Employers and supervisors of Air National Guardsmen got a treat for three days on a trip sponsored by the 150th FW and New Mexico's Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve to Seattle, Wash.

The bosses flew on Utah ANG's C-141, watched an aerial in-flight refueling with a B-52, visited the Naval base, attended a banquet honoring the attendees and toured the city.

Bosslift trips educate and thank employers for their support of the Guard and Reserve.

## 717th Medical Company prepares to head to Afghanistan

**Maj Kimberly Lalley**  
Public Affairs, HQ/NMANG

Members of the New Mexico National Guard's 717th Medical Co. are putting their training to good use toward the war on terrorism in Afghanistan.

The 717th packed six of their helicopters into Air Force cargo airplanes at Fort Bliss along with more than 25 New Mexico soldiers and more than a dozen counterparts from an Oklahoma detachment.

It's the second overseas deployment for the New Mexico unit in as many years. A similar group spent eight months, starting in the fall of 2001, doing rescue missions in Kosovo.

Sgt. 1st Class Dewey [last names intentionally withheld], 41, a full-time flight technician from Santa Fe who served in Kosovo, sees the Afghanistan mission as part of the U.S. fight against terrorism. Afghanistan became the first military battlefield after the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks, and operations continue along its southeast border with Pakistan.

The deployment is expected to last more than six months. The work is expected to include treating coalition troops and civilians, notably children. Crews have been taught emergency pediatric medicine and prenatal care, skills not always given to combat medics.

"I think it's going to be a challenge, helping the civilian populace," said Sgt. Jennifer, 26, a part-time Guardsman who works for a private ambulance company in Albuquerque.

In Kosovo, the 717th performed roughly 10 medical missions a month. The soldiers the unit will replace in Afghanistan, a National Guard group based in California and Nevada, have done about 180 missions in five months - more than one a day.

The deploying unit staged a "graduation exercise" on McGregor Range in southern New Mexico before leaving, capping two months of intensive training.

The mock battle exercise at the range involved an Army air ambulance unit summoned to a skirmish against Taliban resistance. Medics and crew members assessed the "injured" and moved them to helicopters for evacuation.

"This training has been much more high-stress," said unit commander Maj. John, who is deploying as well.

After waiting for a mock F-16 fighter to finish a bombing run, four medical units' helicopters had airspace to approach the wounded. "Fighting" continued nearby, simulated with radio chatter competing with the air ambulances' communication.

Before the 11 wounded were taken off the southern New Mexico desert, crew members carrying one of the "injured" dropped him en route to a helicopter. Another helicopter crew headed back to base without its medic. One crew member misplaced her flight helmet.

"It's chaos," said Sgt. David, 41, of Albuquerque as one of the four UH-60A helicopters lifted off from Fort Bliss. "This is major, mass casualties. It's chaos."